

698. f. 22
AN
A C C O U N T
OF A
C O N T R O V E R S Y

BETWEEN THE
Rev. *SAMUEL WELLER*, L.L.B.
Minister of Maidstone in Kent;

AND
BENJAMIN MILLS,
A Dissenting Minister in the same Town :

Occasioned by a Reflection cast upon the
Dissenters in a late Anonymous Pamphlet, said
to be written by Mr WELLER, intituled, *The*
Trial of Mr WHITEFIELD's Spirit.

By BENJAMIN MILLS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN OSWALD, at the *Rose*
and *Crown* in the *Poultry*. 1741.

ACCOUNT

OF A

CONTRIVERSY

BETWEEN THE

REVEREND WELLES, LL.D.

AND

AND

BENJAMIN MILLS

A DISSENTING MINISTRY IN THE SAME TOWN:

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BENJAMIN MILLS




LONDON:

Printed for John O'Connell, at the W. and A. Press, in the Strand, 1794.



AN
ACCOUNT
OF A
CONTROVERSY,
&c.

 PAMPHLET having been lately published, intituled, *The Trial of Mr Whitefield's Spirit, in some Remarks upon his Fourth Journal, &c.* and some of Mr Weller's particular Friends calling it *His*, with great Commendations of the Book, I was earnestly desirous to see it. And, if I came to the reading of it with *any Prejudice* at all, it was *in Favour* of the Performance; having promised myself *no little Pleasure* in the Perusal of the Book, from the Character I had before received of it. But, to my great Surprise and Concern, among many *judicious* and
A 2 *useful*

useful Remarks upon That, and the former Journals, I thought I espied a little Tincture of that Censoriousness and Uncharitableness towards Dissenters, which the Author finds fault with in Mr Whitefield, towards the Established Church.

AMONG some other Strictures of this kind, I could not help taking a particular Observation of a Paragraph in the 32d Page; where the Author having quoted Mr Wb's Answer to the Bishop of Gloucester, when persuaded by him to drop his itinerant Field-Preaching; viz. *That his Blood ran chill at the very Thought: He thus descants upon it. ' No doubt but the*
' Blood of many a Dissenter in England runs
' chill, with Mr Whitefield's, at the very
' Thoughts of RETURNING INTO THE COMMU-
' NION OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, THO' THE SPI-
' RIT OF GOD MOST SOLEMNLY ADJURE THEM
' SO TO DO: But to despise all religious Order
' and Government, to disobey them that have
' the Rule over them, and, through a conten-
' tious Spirit, to bring among Christians Con-
' fusion, and every evil Work; in these
' things they have no Suspicion of Mistake, nor
' Scruple of Conscience, nor Apprehension of Sin:
' While in the mean Time, Men who are truly
' scrupulous, are equally on their Guard in every
' Part of their Conduct, and as much afraid
' of offending God through the sinful Excesses,
' as through the Defects of a religious Zeal.'

THIS Passage, in that Part of it, particularly, which is marked in Capitals, looks like an Insinuation that the Dissenters are out
of

of the Communion of Christ's Church, and most solemnly adjured by the Spirit of God to return to it. Whatever might be the Author's Meaning, the Words, I conceive, naturally convey such Ideas. And therefore, considering the passage as likely to do a great deal of Mischief, by kindling against *Dissenters* the Hatred of *untinking* and *prejudiced* Persons, of whom Mr *Weller* acknowledges, in his Second Letter, he has known many who are exceedingly mad for the Church; as also, that the greater the Reputation of a Person is who writes such a thing, the more Mischief it may be expected to do; I thought it incumbent on me to offer to Mr *W.* my Exceptions against the Passage. When the most candid Construction I could devise was put upon that Part of the Paragraph I am chiefly concerned with, I could make no better of it than an *Insinuation* of the Guilt of *Schism* against the *Dissenters*: and there are, I am persuaded, rash and ill-disposed Persons enough who will think themselves sufficiently warranted to *Unchurch* and *Unchristian* them from the Authority of those Words, whatever might be the *Writer's* Meaning. I therefore drew up a Letter to Mr *W.* to this Effect.

Reverend

Reverend S I R,

I WAS somewhat surprized to hear the *Dissenters* solemnly questioned from *Your Pulpit*, a few Weeks ago, whether they had any *valid Reasons* for separating from the *Communion* of the *Church of England*; when the *Reasons* of their Conduct have been before the *World* for *so many Years*, and in *so many Books*; and *those Reasons* must be supposed to be still *good*, in *their Account*, till they have received a satisfactory Answer. However, as I have no Inclination to Contention, but would gladly cultivate *Peace with all Men*; and, to that End, desire to put the most *candid* Constructions upon Things; I was content to let that Matter pass as the Effect of an *honest well-meant Zeal*, and designed to take no further Notice of it than what I might, *some Time or other*, have Opportunity to do in *private Conversation with the Preacher*. It is not therefore upon *that Account*, Sir, that I give You the Trouble of *This*.

THE Occasion of *this Address* to You is a Paragraph in a Book lately published, intitled, *The Trial of Mr Whitefield's Spirit, &c.* which the current Fame of *this Town* ascribes to You. The Pamphlet had been given out to be *Your's* for some Time before I got the Sight of it. Upon reading it over, I acknowledge, I knew not how to perswade my self to give Credit to the *common Report*. Not but that I look upon the Book, *as far as it concerns Mr Wh. only*, to be drawn up in
so

so *sold* and *judicious* a Manner, that it would be no Disparagement to any Man to be called *the Author* of it. The Thing which made me suspect that common Fame had not given the Book to it's *right Owner*; was a Paragraph in the 32^d Page of it, which appeared to me so contrary to the Notion I had entertained of Mr *Weller*; so unnecessary to the *professed* Purpose of the Book, which was to show, *not the Spirit* of the *Dissenters*, but *the Spirit* of Mr *Wh.* who is *no Dissenter*; and so little favouring of that Virtue *Charity*, with the Want of which the Author *largely*, and, I think, *justly* accuses Mr *Wh.* that I could not easily persuade my self such a Paragraph could drop from *Your Pen*. It would have been no Wonder, I thought, if the *Dissenters* had been *unchurch'd* and *unchristian'd* in the Lump by a Writer of little Judgment, and less *Charity*; but, that such a *severe Insinuation* should come from a *Gentleman* of good Sense, and a *sedate Temper*, appeared to me quite unaccountable. I hoped therefore that a little Time would have convinced the World, that they had ascribed the Book to the *wrong Person*; and then I had spared both *You* and *my self* this Trouble. But the more the Thing is talked of in Conversation, the more the Belief prevails; and, if I am rightly informed, is supported by *very probable* Circumstances.

THE Case being thus, I cannot think, Sir, that there is any Need of a *further Apology* for *this Letter*. As, I trust, I shall at all
Times

Times be ready to render the *Honour* that is due to *Your Character* and *Abilities*, so I am well persuaded that all the *impartial* World will acknowledge, I have a *Right* to call upon You, either to *retract* so *harsh* a Reflection cast upon the *Body of the Dissenters*, in Case it be *Your's*, or else to *support* it by *sufficient* Reasons. I am,

Reverend S I R,

Your Respectful

Dec. 18,

1740.

Humble Servant,

B. M I L L S.

To this I received a Reply the next Day, which gave no Satisfaction in any thing, unless it was in the Truth of the general Report about the *Author* of the Book, since it did not touch the *main* Point which occasioned my Letter. The Reader, I believe, will easily perceive what was the *principal* Thing I drove at in objecting against the Paragraph, from several Terms made use of in my Letter: such as *Unchurching* and *Unchristianing the Dissenters in the Lump*; and my calling the Charge I had to advance against the Passage a *severe Insinuation*; and afterwards, an *harsh Reflection upon the Body of the Dissenters*. These Terms, I apprehended, would have been

been sufficient to have guarded against a Mistake, and to *point out* what was my *main* Drift in writing the Letter. Mr *W.* takes no Notice at all of this; but fixing His Eye upon a *quite different* Thing, which *to me* was a Matter of little Concern in Comparison of the other, and which I could scarce be supposed to object against under the Notion of a *general Reflection*, because it is *in Words* asserted only of *many*; nor to term it an *Insinuation*, because it is expressed in the *most direct* Terms, His Answer is aimed at *that Point only* which had not been in Controversy between us. Hereupon I thought it necessary to send a *second Letter*, to set the Matter upon it's right Foot. And, as I had, *in the mean Time*, received further Evidence, and such as amounted to a *clear Proof*, that the *first* was not directed to the *wrong Person*, I make no Scruple in *this Letter*, to call Mr *W.* the Author of the Pamphlet. It ran in the following Words.

Reverend S I R,

I AM so far from the Vanity of considering myself *on an equal Foot* with You, that I readily yield You the Superiority in every *valuable* Respect. Therefore, if I had been apprehensive that *any Expression* in my Letter could have been interpreted as carrying a *magisterial Air*, or even as *any Way* unfit to have been used to a *Superior*, I assure You, Sir, it should have been dropped, and a more *inoffensive* one set in it's Room. However, I do

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not

not apprehend that *the Word* You take Notice of carries in it any Thing of the *Idea* of *Authority*: For certainly, a Man may, without any Indecency, *call upon* one who is much Superior to him to do *that* which the *Inferior* has a *legal* Right to, or even a *reasonable* Ground to expect from him, though it be a *Favour*. And You will please to observe, Sir, that the Word I used was not REQUIRE, as you have put it, but CALL UPON.

IT is readily allowed, that *no Man* is *supposed* to be obliged to defend Papers to which he has not set his Name, if those Papers are not by some other Means known to be HIS, or generally believed to be so upon very probable and reasonable Grounds. But give me leave, Sir, to say, that, in the *present* Case, there was not only a very strong Probability to determine me to address myself to You in my *first Letter*, but I have since received further Evidence that I was not mistaken in the *Author*, even such as, I am satisfied, will by *Yourself* be allowed sufficient.

BUT I am Your Debtor, Sir, that, though You do not think fit to own the Pamphlet in Your Letter to me, which You have not been so backward to own to some others, the Reason of which Yourself best knows; yet You are pleased to undertake to show me, that the Passage I objected against, as a Reflection upon the Body of the Dissenters, carries in it most apparently no such Reflection. Had You shown me this, an End had been at once put to all Controversy between You and me; and I had immediately

immediately acknowledged myself satisfied. But instead of this, I am obliged to say that what You have offered does not appear to me to be in the *least* an Answer to the *Exception* I had made against the Paragraph in Question. I have too great an Opinion of *Your Judgment, Sir*, to think it *possible* that You should not observe what was the *main Hinge* of the Debate; and You would *justly* conceive a *very poor* Notion of *mine*, if I should be so *weak* and *easy* as to mistake *mere Evasions* for *solid Arguments*. If in the Sequel of *this Letter* I do not *justify* the calling what You offer by so *uncourtly* a Name, I will be content to bear Your Censure.

I OBSERVE then, *Sir*, that You do not take any Notice in *Your Letter* of the *principal Point* I had in View, in objecting against the Paragraph. You say, *as long as there are any among the various Denominations of Dissenters, who despise all religious Order and Government, as You cannot but know there are many such, it cannot be judged an unjust Reflection to put such Persons in Mind, that they ought to be as much afraid of offending God through the sinful Excesses, as through the Defects, of a religious Zeal.* It was by no Means my Design, *Sir*, to take upon me the Defence of *every* Thing that might pass under the Name of *religious Zeal*. I well know that *Zeal* may be either a *very good*, or a *very bad* and *mischievous* Thing, according as it is *qualified* and *managed*: and am sensible, that Persons have *need* to be cautioned as much against the *Excesses*, as the

Defects of it, because that *on both Hands* they are in Danger of offending God. Nor had I any Thoughts of disputing, whether there be any among the various Denominations of Dissenters, that despise all religious Order and Government. There may, perhaps, be many that are obnoxious to this Censure. But then, I cannot think that this is a fault chargeable only upon Dissenters. Do You certainly know, Sir, that there are none who attend upon the Worship of the Church of England, and, perhaps, are never seen in a Dissenting Congregation, who have as contemptible Thoughts of religious Order and Government as any among the several Denominations of Dissenters? But not to dwell upon this. I thought it would have appeared very plain by my Letter, that the chief Thing I had to object against the forementioned Paragraph was, that therein You insinuate that the Dissenters are out of the Communion of the Church of Christ. It was with a View to this that I used the Terms *Unchurching* and *Unchristianing the Dissenters in the Lump*: And, I acknowledge, the Paragraph, upon this Account, appeared very shocking to me; for, if the Dissenting Congregations must not be allowed to be Churches of Christ, what can they be accounted in the Judgment of Persons who view them in such a Light, but *Synagogues of Satan*? This, Sir, You say nothing to in Your Reply; so that I had good Reason to call it *evasive*.

Now

Now *this* being the Point I have to debate with You, suffer me to apply to it the Reasoning of *Your Letter*; and I doubt not but it will *easily* be made to appear, that Your Defence of the Passage under Consideration is *insufficient*. You say *there is nothing affirmed by the Pamphlet-Writer, either of ALL the Dissenters, universally; nor of THE Dissenters, indefinitely; the Expression there being in these Words, No doubt but MANY: which can mean only some particular Persons, in Contradistinction to the Body of the Dissenters.* That as for the Presbyterians, for whom alone, You think, I can be concerned, they are not once mentioned throughout all *this Pamphlet*. That Papists, Socinians, Deists, Quakers, and Baptists, are in several Places mentioned as the Dissenters whom the Author had, particularly, in his View; but no where Presbyterians. I make no Doubt, Sir, that You are as able as any Man living to explain what Dissenters the Author had in his View: But cannot devise how You should know that I am only concerned to vindicate the Presbyterians: and solemnly assure You, that, in writing this, I do not take upon me merely the Defence of any particular Set or Denomination of Dissenters; but plead the Cause of Liberty and Charity against such Principles as straiten the Communion of Christ's Church, by confining it to any one Denomination of Men, or outward Form of Government and Worship.

You

You say, that *Papists, Socinians, Deists, Quakers, and Baptists*, are several Times mentioned as the *Dissenters* the Author had, particularly, in View. But I know not, Sir, with what Propriety *Socinians* and *Deists* can be termed *Denominations* of *Dissenters*: For surely there are some of both these Characters who do ordinarily frequent the *Assemblies* of the *Establishment*: and, if the Matter were well inquired into; I believe it would be found that there are but few of these Sorts among the *Dissenters*, in Comparison of the Number that pass under the Name of *Churchmen*. *Papists*, indeed, in Respect of the *Church* of *England*, may well enough be termed *Dissenters*; tho' I believe, it is more usual with the Gentlemen of that Church, in their Sermons and Books, to distinguish them, by some peculiar Appellations, from others to whom they apply the Name *Dissenters*. However that be, You know that many Writers of the *established Communion* have contended, that the *Church* of *Rome* is a *true Church*; and so *Papists* not to be excluded from the *Communion* of *Christians*: And if so, I cannot but think it would be as unreasonable to pronounce even of the *Quakers* that they are out of the *Communion* of *Christ's Church*.

BUT *Presbyterians* are no where mentioned as the *Dissenters* You had in View, and so they are not necessarily to be included among the *Dissenters* this Paragraph refers to: Especially, as You blame me for restraining to the *Presbyterians* in particular what is said of some among

among the *general Body of Dissenters*. What, Sir, can be the *Design* of these Expressions? Can it be any other than *Collusion*, and an *Artifice* to hide Your *real Meaning*? Would You be understood to mean, that the *Presbyterians* were not indeed among the *Dissenters* You referred to in the Paragraph? That *they* are none of the *Dissenters* You would have to return to the *Communion of Christ's Church*? None of the *Dissenters* whom the *Spirit of God* solemnly adjures so to do? That *they* are not among the *Dissenters* who despise all religious Order and Government, disobey them that have the Rule over them, and, through a contentious Spirit, bring among *Christians* Confusion and every evil Work, without any Suspicion of Mistake, or Scruple of Conscience, or Apprehension of Sin? If You designed to exempt the *Presbyterians* from this Charge, and to allow their Churches to be Churches of Christ, I dare say, that those of Your *Parishioners* who are of that Denomination, would look upon themselves as highly indebted to You for such an unexpected liberal Concession, such a distinguishing Favour done them: especially, as it will furnish them with somewhat of a Reply, if a certain Gentleman should think fit to leave his Text a second Time, to expostulate with them about their Separation. But, I acknowledge, Sir, I have no Right to put an Interpretation upon Your Words, which You will not admit of; and I a little question whether I shall obtain Your Leave for this Construction of them.

BUT what if *the Presbyterians* are not mentioned by Name in the Paragraph? Have You not expressed Yourself in such a Manner as *any one* would have done who *intended* to include them? And can any Man who reads the Passage be supposed likely to understand it in *any other* Manner? Had You intended to except *Them*, it had been *easy* to have inserted some *restrictive* Expressions, which would have clearly signified your Meaning. If the Paragraph had run, *for Instance*, in such a Form as *this*, *No Doubt but the Blood of many a Popish, Quaker, and Baptist Dissenter in England runs chill, with Mr Whitefield's, at the very Thoughts of returning into the Episcopal or Presbyterian Communion of Christ's Church, though the Spirit of God most solemnly adjure them so to do; but to despise all Episcopal and Presbyterian religious Order and Government, to disobey those Episcopal and Presbyterian Ministers that have the Rule over them, &c.* If the Passage, *I say*, had been put into *this* Form, it would have appeared to all the World that the *Presbyterians* were not any of the *Dissenters* You had in View. Whereas, according to the *Terms* in which it stands in *Your Book*, I cannot see that there is any Mercy shown *them* above others of their Brethren; any Discrimination of the *Presbyterians* from *Socinians, Deists, Quakers, Papists, &c.* And, I believe, it will be no *easy* Matter to persuade any intelligent discerning Reader that You *intended* any Distinction.

EVERY

EVERY one knows, Sir, that the Word *Dissenter* is a general Term, including in it all those religious Denominations and Societies which are in a different Method of Order and Government from the established Church; and, upon the Account of their disagreeing with, and separating from, the Establishment, they are called by that Name; and they have other more appropriating and peculiar Denominations, which distinguish them one from another. Therefore, when You, Sir, who are a Minister of the Church of England, speak of Dissenters as Persons to be called upon to return to the Communion of Christ's Church, as You must be supposed by Christ's Church to mean the Episcopal Church of England; for which alone, to borrow an Expression from Your Letter, You can possibly be supposed to be concerned, as being the Communion of which You are a Minister; so all that have separated from the Communion of the Church of England must be referred to in the Passage, and included under the general Term Dissenters, as Persons whom the Spirit of God most solemnly adjures to return to the Communion of Christ's Church, i. e. the Church of England.

THAT by the Communion of Christ's Church You mean, precisely, the Communion of the Church of England, I have no Reason to doubt. There are many Passages in the Pamphlet which clearly enough explain Your Meaning in this Expression. The Service of the Church of England is OUR BLESSED LITURGY, p. 52. The Ministers of the Church of

England are THE MINISTERS of GOD, p. 42. GOD'S PRIESTS, p. 17. And PASTORS of CHRIST'S FLOCK, p. 54. Such is the Order and Government of that Church, that, in Comparison of it, every Dissenting Communion seems to be looked upon as a Den of Thieves and Robbers; a mere Chaos of Irregularity and Deformity; so that You seem unwilling to allow them any Regards of the Divine Presence; or, in Your own Words, p. 29. That God owns their Cause, or has set his Seal to their Claims and Pretensions. And what Communion can it be but that of the Church of England, the Thoughts of returning to which, You doubt not would make the Blood of many a Dissenter in England run chill. And certainly You will not say that 'tis only some of the Dissenters whom the Spirit of God most solemnly adjures to return to the Communion of the Church of England; even those particular Persons only, in Contradistinction to the Body of the Dissenters, who, You say, despise all religious Order and Government, disobey them that have the Rule over them, and bring among Christians Confusion and every evil Work, without any Suspicion of Mistake, or Scruple of Conscience, or Apprehension of Sin. Are these the only Dissenters whom the Paragraph insinuates to be out of the Communion of Christ's Church? And whose Duty You suppose it is to return into it? No surely. But the Dissenters in general; THE Dissenters, indefinitely; ALL the Dissenters, universally; even all that have gone off from the Communion of the Church of England.

THUS,

THUS, Sir, I think, I have proved what was asserted in my *first Letter*, viz. That the Paragraph referred to is a *Reflection* upon the *Body* of the *Dissenters*; and shown what in the Beginning of this Letter I undertook, that that which You have offered to prove it *most apparently to be no such Reflection* is quite *beside the Question*. And now I leave it to *Your own Thoughts*, whether I, as being *one* of that *Body*, and in the *Bebalf* of the *rest*, have not Reason to expect, that You *do* them *Justice* by retracting that Reflection, or else show by *sufficient Proofs* that You have done them *no Wrong*.

You have, *doubtless*, observed, Sir, that in several Places of *this Letter* I have called the Pamphlet *Your's*. If You think I have taken *too much Liberty* in so doing, I am ready to produce my Authorities, whenever You please to require them of,

Reverend S I R,

Your very Humble Servant,

Dec. 26,

1740.

B. MILLS.

C. 2

POST

P O S T S C R I P T.

As to the Affair I took Notice of in the Beginning of *my* Letter, and You at the Close of *Your's*, I have before intimated that it was not a Matter in which *You* are concerned, but *another Person* in *Your Pulpit*. I am very sensible that the Judgment of *our common Master* is what we ought to have the *principal* Regard to in whatever we deliver from *the Pulpit* or *the Press*. Nor would I give Heed to such Representations of Things as ignorant or ill-disposed Persons make. The Thing referred to was what I myself heard, with many other Dissenters, who, on that Occasion, were present. And the View I had in mentioning it was to show, that I do not seek Matters of Debate, nor am inclined to contend upon every Occasion; though now I thought it would be a *Fault* in me to continue silent.

To this likewise I soon received an Answer, not much more satisfactory than the former. And thus far the Debate proceeded in the Way of *private* Letters. But, as Mr *W.* thinks fit still to insist upon it, that the *only Matter* in Controversy is a Point about which I have *never yet* moved any Controversy; and, while He seems inclined to *wave* that which is the *chief* Thing I concerned myself about, would persuade me that I agree with Him in *every Thing* I had *blamed the Passage* for

for intimating: I thought it therefore proper to refer all that has past on my Part to *the Judgment of the Publick*, together with the following Letter in Answer to His last.

To the Rev. Mr. *WELLER*.

Reverend SIR,

IF I had published a Book in which You observed any Passage reflecting upon the Church of England, and concerning which You thought fit to expostulate with me, I cannot but think You would insist upon it as Your Right to form Your own Objections; and that I owed it both to You and to the Publick to answer directly to those Objections, or shew there was no Foundation for making them. If, when You had pointed out particular Exceptions against what I had written, I should reply to a quite different Point, which You had not laid your Objection against, and tell You that *That was the only Point I was at all concerned about*: If I should contend again and again that You had expressly owned every thing You had blamed the Passage for intimating, only because You had allowed that Point which alone I thought fit to speak to, and to represent as the Hinge of the Controversy, though it was not the Point upon which Your Objection was founded; I am persuaded You would complain of me as trifling with You, and choosing Weapons for You which I knew were not likely to do much Execution.

YET

YET give me leave, Sir, to say that after *this Manner* You are pleased to deal with me in the present Debate. You tell me in Your last Letter, that *the Matter in Controversy is a single Point, namely, whether there are not some particular Persons among the Body of Dissenters under that Disposition mentioned in the Paragraph, i. e. to despise all religious Order and Government, &c.* That You concern Yourself with nothing further than this: That I acknowledge the very Point which alone You concern Yourself with defending: That I expressly own in my last Letter every thing that this Passage is blamed for intimating. Whether this be the only Point You are concerned to defend, or not, for what I can see, You would choose it should be so, because You know, it is a Point which will cost the least Labour to defend. But I am amazed to see it asserted in Your Letter, that I expressly own every thing that the Passage is blamed for intimating. Where, Sir, have I owned that the Dissenters are out of the Communion of Christ's Church? Which was one Thing this Passage was blamed for intimating. Where have I owned that the Spirit of God most solemnly adjures the Dissenters to return to the Communion of Christ's Church? And is not this another Thing that the Passage is blamed for intimating? The Letter of the Passage, I mean, intimates it; though, by the Explication You have given of that Term in Your last, it seems as if it were an Expression used inadvertently instead of the Communion of the Church of England. Nay,

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is there *any thing*, but what is just before mentioned, that I have *hitherto* in the Course of these Letters *blamed the Passage for intimating?* I am content to appeal to Yourself, whether it can *possibly* follow, from my granting You that there may, perhaps, be *many* among the several Denominations of Dissenters, who *despise all religious Order and Government*, (by which, I suppose, You meant the Order and Government of the Church of England) that therefore I have *allowed every Thing for which the Paragraph was blamed*. Was it not possible, Sir, to find any Thing besides this exceptionable in the Paragraph? If You have cast Your Eye upon it, as it is set down in the Beginning of this Pamphlet, You must certainly see that there is something else, and something of greater Consequence, that I have *blamed* the Paragraph for. Do not You Yourself see, and, permit me to say, acknowledge in Effect in Your last Letter, that there is something else *blameable* in it; I mean, Your speaking of the Church of Christ in such a Manner, as if it were of no greater Latitude or Extent than the *Episcopal Communion* of the Church of England?

SUPPOSE a Minister of the *Presbyterian* Establishment in Scotland had dealt in the same Manner with his *Episcopal* Dissenting Brethren there, calling upon them to *return to the Communion of Christ's Church*; I cannot but think You would have felt some Indignation rising in Your Breast, at such an *injurious* and *uncharitable* Insinuation. Would You account

it

it no Fault in such a one, if the Passage I refer to had been written by him, and calculated for *North Britain*, to use Terms concerning the *Episcopalians* there, which are properly applied only to Persons who have renounced Christianity, or rent themselves off from the Body of Christ? Would You think he had sufficiently vindicated himself by replying to any one who objected against the Passage it's *Unchurching* and *Unchristianing* the Dissenters, that the *Writer of the Paragraph*, being a Member of the Church of Scotland, had apparently in his Thoughts at the writing of it those Passages of Scripture, of obeying them that have the Rule over them; of Envy and Strife being an Inlet to Confusion, with the Text in *Philippians* referred to in the Margin of the Book: That, under this Impression on his Mind, he observes that there are some Persons dissenting from the Establishment, who have no Suspicion of Mistake, no Scruple of Conscience, nor Apprehension of Sin, upon the Subject of such their Dissension: That to these particular Persons, whoever they be, this Passage is most evidently restrained, and that to understand it of other Persons, or of all Dissenters in general, is to show no Regard to the most apparent Meaning, and to the clear Expressions of the Writer? If You had taken upon You the Defence of the *Episcopal Dissenters* in Scotland, would You be satisfied with this as an Answer to Your Objection against the Passage? I can by no Means think You would esteem it satisfactory; especially if the Advocate for the
Scotch

Scotch Establishment should over and over insist upon it, that he could not think the Paragraph liable to any just Exception after all the Pains You had taken about it; and tell You, it was Time to put a Stop to a Debate which was going off from the Matter which first gave Occasion to it.

You would, doubtless, easily perceive, that by *the Communion of Christ's Church* he intended *precisely the Presbyterian Communion of Scotland*. But then it would be natural to reply, that the Passage, as he had worded it, excluded *all* that dissent from the *Established Church of Scotland* out of the *Communion of Christ's Church*; and that, consequently, it carried in it a very severe and uncharitable Innuendo against all the *Episcopal Dissenters* in that Kingdom, and, indeed, *any others* who are of a *different Communion* from the *Presbyterian Establishment*. What Thoughts, Sir, would You entertain of this Antagonist, if, while You were making such Objections as these, he should complain of You for calling his Defence *evasive*, and tell You roundly, that *You have owned every Thing the Passage was blamed for intimating*, and that he cannot think it liable to any just Exception?

You think the Dissenters blameable for not returning into the *Communion of Christ's Church*, meaning thereby *the Communion of the Church of England*; and again, You think it the Duty of all Persons to come into the *Communion of the Established Church*; but at the same Time You say, You *abhor the Inference I draw from*

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thence,

thence, viz. that the Churches of Dissenters are no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan; and that You do not entertain the least *Imagination of Unchurching and Unchristianing any of those who dissent from the Establishment*, and think it unjust that I should draw such kind of Inferences. And again, when You sit down, say You, and draw a Variety of Consequences from the Passage in Debate, You Your self only, are answerable for them; and with them the Writer, who absolutely disclaims them, has nothing to do. To which I answer, that a Person who would draw any Inferences at all from this or any other Passage, would consider what the Words naturally import; for as to the Sense of the Writer, that must remain uncertain and unknown till He is pleased to explain himself. The Inference I drew is what all intelligent Persons I have conversed with upon the Subject, among whom are some of the Communion of the *Established Church*, apprehend to be an obvious and natural Consequence of the Expression as it stands in Your Book. I did not expect indeed from the Beginning, that You would abide by this Consequence; but, however, it appeared not merely an *unguarded* but a *very dangerous* Expression; dangerous, I mean, as to the Influence it might be expected to have on weak Persons, who are already but *too much prejudiced and embittered* against Dissenters. If, instead of the *Communion of Christ's Church*, You had written the *Communion of the Church of England*, or the *Episcopal Communion of Christ's*

Christ's Church, no one could have been at any Uncertainty as to Your Meaning; and I should never have entertained the least Thought of excepting against the Paragraph, as *Unchurching* and *Unchristianing* the Dissenters, whatever I might have objected to it upon another Account.

There is one Passage, Sir, of Your last Letter, in which I know not whether I fathom the Depth of Your Meaning. You say, *In the mean while, this Writer (i. e. the Writer of the Trial, &c.) will make no Scruple of acknowledging frankly, that, in the Course of his Time, he has met with many Persons who have been exceedingly mad for the Church, and many others who have been exceedingly mad against it.* As I would always judge on the charitable Side, I am very unwilling in the present Case to suspect that You intended, in the latter Clause of that Sentence, to insinuate any Thing like a personal Reflection: And the rather, because I do not know any single Expression in my former Letters which can have given Occasion for such an Insinuation. If then You mean only that You have known many Bigots on both Sides of the Question, it is no other than what every Person has, doubtless, observed; and what every Man of Candour and Charity laments, and would exert his utmost Endeavours to rectify. Every one who is tolerably acquainted with Mankind must know, that Diversities in religious Opinions and Usages have of all other Things the greatest Influence upon the Tempers of

the *Generality*, to *sour* and *irritate* them one against another. Especially will this be the Effect upon the *weaker* and *less considerate* Part of Mankind. But, as I have no Apprehension that You will undertake the Defence of Persons who *madly* and *outrageously* contend for the Church; so I, on my Part, concern myself with the Vindication of nothing else but *sober* and *charitable Non-conformity*. Bigotry I look upon to be a very *mischievous* and *baneful* Thing; and not a *lot* better when it appears in the Conduct of a Dissenter, than when it is seen in a Member of the Establishment. Nothing has made more dreadful Havock in the Christian World, and in our own Nation in particular, than *this*. But give me Leave, Sir, to say, I apprehend 'tis a Matter not unworthy of Consideration, whether such Passages as *that* which gave Occasion to this Debate, and others of like Tendency, have not contributed, as much as any Thing, to spirit up that *Madness* of Contention *on both Sides*, which, You say, You have often *met with*. It has been generally observed, that if the Minds of the common People have been at any Time kindled into a more than ordinary Rage, or, if You please, *religious Madness*, one against another, the *Clergy* have first sounded the Alarm of War from the *Pulpit*, or the *Press*, or *both*. You have, in several Places of Your Book *, pointed out a *very remarkable* Time when this Observation was verified *on one Side*:

* *Trial*, &c. p. 28, 29, 30.

Side: When the Passions of Men were violently inflamed against the Hierarchy, and the whole Constitution of the Church of *England*; and when those who opposed it, getting Power into their Hands, accomplished for a while the Subversion of it: It will not be denied, that some of the *Clergy* who had at that Time the superior Influence, being disgusted at former Oppressions of the Hierarchy, contributed not a little to the preparing the Spirits of the People for the Execution of the Design that was then in Hand. And I am sure You need not be put in Mind of another Period of the *English* History, when Men were full as *Mad* on the other Side; when Dissenters were branded with publick Marks of Infamy; when Mobs and Riots were raised to assault *their Persons*, and demolish *their Places of Worship*. Nor is it to be concealed, that this Rage was stirred up in great Measure by the Influence of the *Clergy*; with whom it was then fashionable to pour out Invectives against the *Settaries*, or, as the Phrase at that Time was, the *Fanaticks*, and to represent them as the *Off-scouring of all Things*. And the best Way that I know to keep Men from running again into such *Madness*, and to bring them to a more calm and charitable Temper, is for *Ministers of every Denomination* to avoid Reflections and Censures upon those who think differently from them; and to inculcate upon their People the indispensable Obligations of mutual Forbearance, Candour, and Charity. Nothing, surely, can be a more likely

likely Means to root *Bigottry* out of Mens Hearts, and to bring them *on every Side* to their right *Mind*.

I do not know, Sir, that there was any Expression in my last Letter, which gave the least *Intimation* that I thought You an Enemy to the *Liberty* the Dissenters enjoy; and, am sure, it was a Matter which did not enter into my Thoughts at the Writing of it. But I am much pleased that You have put it in my Power to let the World know, as from Your own Pen, that You *shall at all Times be ready to do, and even to suffer, as much in Defence of Liberty of Conscience, as those that plead for it in the most passionate Manner*; as also, that it was not Your Design, in the Passage referred to, to *Unchurch or Unchristian* the Dissenters, whatever the Letter of the Paragraph may seem to import; but that You are content they should be reckoned in the *Communion of Christ's Church*, though they are not in the *Communion of the Church of England*; nay, though they think with *Aversion of returning into that Communion*. But give me Leave, Sir, to say, I cannot help thinking, that there is *one Thing* in the Passage, according to *Your own Construction* of it, for which You are still accountable to the World, *viz.* That THE SPIRIT OF GOD DOES MOST SOLEMNLY ADJURE THE DISSENTERS TO RETURN TO THE COMMUNION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND; or, in other Words, *that they are guilty of Schism in separating from that Communion*. The clear Proof
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of this Point will be of excellent Advantage to many, and highly oblige,

Reverend S I R,

Your very Respectful

Humble Servant,

B. MILLS.

THE Reader, I believe, expected to have seen Mr *W*'s Answers inserted, in their proper Place, in these Papers; as, indeed, they had been, if His Permission could have been obtained for the Publication of them. Nor, I suppose, would any one imagine from my first Letter to Him, as well as the publick Manner in which the Reflection complained of was cast on the Dissenters, that *That Gentleman* could be in the least surprized at the Motion of submitting to the Judgment of the World, what had passed between Us in private. Perhaps, the Circumstances of the Case being such, I might have been excusable, if, without asking Leave, I had sent His Letters abroad. However, as Mr *W*. was altogether averse to the Publication, that I might

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might not be represented as deficient in any Point of Respect, and all Occasion be removed from those who, perhaps, would be glad to lay hold on any Pretence to censure me as dishonourable or ungenerous, I was content to drop that Matter, and to publish nothing but my own Concern in the Controversy; adding only some Enlargements to my third Letter, which, if Mr *W*'s had been published, would have been short; the Design of it, as it was first drawn up, being chiefly an Invitation to *That Gentleman* to make good the Point to which the Debate had been reduced by the Concession of His Second Letter.

F I N I S

